

**Northwest Missouri State University**  
**Board of Regents**  
**Date of Meeting: December 18, 2009**

Cabinet Member: Douglas Dunham

Agenda Item: Conferral of honorary degree

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**Background:**

The purpose of an honorary degree is to bestow Northwest Missouri State University's highest honor upon individuals who have distinguished themselves through outstanding service to humanity. By focusing deserved attention upon individuals of exemplary achievements, an honorary degree highlights the University as a community of scholars that endeavors to recognize those who advance knowledge and improve the human condition.

Nominations for honorary degrees may come from faculty, the Northwest Foundation, or the Northwest Leadership Team. Per policy guidelines, I then convened a six-member committee that consisted of three members of the faculty—one from each of the three colleges selected by the faculty from within each college; one representative of the Foundation; one member of the President's Cabinet; and me. The Committee reviewed Mr. Kruse's credentials (see below), and unanimously recommends to the president for submission to the Board of Regents the conferral of the honorary **Doctor of Pedagogy** degree on Mr. Kruse. I concur with the committee's recommendation.

Mr. Lowell Kruse recently retired from his position as President and Chief Executive Officer of Heartland Health (including Heartland Regional Medical Center, Heartland Clinic, Community Health Improvement Solutions, and Heartland Foundation) after serving in that role for 25 years. He now serves in a volunteer capacity as Senior Fellow – Healthy Communities for Heartland Foundation and as the Chairperson of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. Mr. Kruse is well known regionally and nationally for his commitment to quality and passion for improving the quality of life within the region. During his tenure with Heartland Health, he successfully facilitated the merger of two community hospitals into a Medical Center that is nationally recognized for quality. A quintessential humanitarian, Mr. Kruse has a penchant for the region's youth, in whom he sees boundless potential and hope for the future. Through his work with Heartland Foundation, Mr. Kruse has championed initiatives to provide structured education designed to inspire middle school students to aspire to seek post-graduate education then return to live and work in the region where they will bring their potential to fruition. He serves on a variety of regional and national boards, committees and task forces:

- Fellow – American College of Healthcare Executives
- Fellow – Healthy Communities Fellowship - American Hospital Association/Health Forum
- Board of Directors (Chair) – Missouri State Coordinating Board for Higher Education
- Board of Directors (Co-Chair) – Missouri State Family and Community Trust
- Board of Directors (Past Chair) – Excellence in Missouri Foundation
- Board of Directors – Institute for Industrial and Applied Life Sciences
- Board of Directors – Research Park Board, Missouri Western State University
- Board of Directors – Northwest Missouri Community Foundation
- Chair – Business Roundtable on Health and Productivity, St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce

In addition, during the course of his professional life, Mr. Kruse has served on numerous boards, committees, commissions and task forces and in leadership capacities in various professional and civic organizations including State and National Jaycee Organizations, state hospital associations, American Hospital Association, Chamber of Commerce, United Way, State Commissions, health planning agencies, and similar organizations and initiatives. Mr. Kruse earned the Master of Hospital Administration from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Psychology from Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD.

For the Board's information, Northwest's policy regarding honorary degrees places the following limitations on the conferral of these degrees:

- No more than four such degrees may be granted in any one year.
- Honorary degrees shall not be awarded posthumously or in absentia.
- An honorary degree may not be awarded in consideration of money or other gifts of value to the University.
- Honorary degrees will not be awarded to active or retired members of the University's faculty or staff.
- As a general policy, honorary degrees will not be awarded to political officials until they have retired from political life.
- Prior to public announcement by the President, all matters relating to honorary degrees will be treated as confidential.

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**Issue:**

Given that this nomination does not conflict with any of the limitations described on the previous page, I concur with the committee's recommendation to confer of the honorary **Doctor of Pedagogy** degree on Mr. Lowell Kruse, to be conferred on December 18, 2009.

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**President's Recommendation:**

I recommend approval.